



# Hard Scrabble: Observations on a Patch of Land

*John Graves*

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"A kind of homemade book—imperfect like a handmade thing, a prize. It's a galloping, spontaneous book, on occasion within whooping distance of that greatest and sweetest of country books, Ivan Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Notebook*." —Edward Hoagland, *New York Times Book Review*

"His subjects are trees and brush, hired help, fences, soil, armadillos and other wildlife, flood and drought, local history, sheep and goats . . . and they come to us reshaped and reenlivened by his agreeably individual (and sometimes cranky) notions." —*New Yorker*

"If *Goodbye to a River* was in some sense Graves's *Odyssey*, this book is his [version of Hesiod's] *Works and Days*. It is partly a book about work, partly a book about nature, but mostly a book about belonging. In the end John Graves has learned to belong to his patch of land so thoroughly that at moments he can sense in himself a unity with medieval peasants and Sumerian farmers, working with their fields by the Tigris." —Larry McMurtry, *Washington Post Book World*

"*Hard Scrabble* is hard pastoral of the kind we have learned to recognize in Wordsworth, Frost, Hemingway, and Faulkner. It celebrates life in accommodation with a piece of the 'given' creation, a recalcitrant four hundred or so acres of Texas cedar brake, old field, and creek bottom, which will require of any genuine resident all the character he can muster." —*Southwest Review*

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